

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

WH 208

1. Name

historic Bellingham National Bank Building

and or common

2. Location

street & number 101-111 East Holly Street not for publication

city, town Bellingham vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Whatcom code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Morris Piha Company

street & number 300 Elliott Avenue West, Suite 310

city, town Seattle vicinity of state Washington 98119

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Whatcom County Courthouse

street & number 311 Grand Avenue

city, town Bellingham state Washington 98225

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Whatcom County Preservation Planning Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11

city, town Olympia state Washington 98504

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bellingham National Bank Building is a handsome five story commercial structure with a bank and retail storefronts on the ground floor and professional offices on the four floors above. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete but is faced on two facades with terra cotta and brick. The banking room on the first floor also has shallow bay windows that are held in elaborately molded cast iron frames. The Bellingham National Bank Building can be most accurately placed within the Commercial Style; however, the building also displays a number of classically-inspired decorative features. The structure is located on a prominent corner in downtown Bellingham. Most neighboring buildings are smaller in scale than the Bellingham National Bank Building and exhibit different of architectural styles and periods of construction.

The ground floor and basement of the structure are rectangular in plan measuring 125 feet along the Holly Street (southwest) elevation and 105 feet along the Cornwall Avenue (northwest) elevation. The upper four floors then rise in a fifty foot deep "L" plan along the streetfront elevations. Decorative features are limited to the elevations on the northwest and southwest sides. The other facades have exposed concrete walls.

Iron-railed sunken stairways to the basement level of the building were placed on the sidewalk next to the building on its northwest elevation. The tall first floor of the structure is composed of the banking offices and several retail shops. Each shop is sixteen feet wide and has a recessed street level entry and plate glass display windows. Four of these shops are located on the southwest elevation and two on the northwest.

The bank offices utilize the corner of the building facing the intersection. The main banking room is articulated by shallow bay windows that are set on a marble podium and held in cast iron frames. Narrow cast iron pilasters support a segmentally arched pediment. This iron work is enriched by a variety of moldings. Above the bay are transom lights that have been obscured by newer metal grilles. The recessed doorway to the bank is flanked by stone Doric columns. The interior of the banking rooms were "modernized" in 1939, 1951, and the 1960's. Acoustic tile covers the heavily molded ceiling and paneling has covered some pilasters.

The entrance serving the upper floor offices is on Holly Avenue beneath a keystone semi-circular fanlight. This entrance is composed of a vaulted vestibule and a richly appointed lobby. The walls and floors of the lobby are faced in Colorado Yule marble, Alaskan marble tile, and mahogany. Details include marble pilasters and a bronze and marble staircase.

There is a cornice with frieze between the first and second floors of the southwest and northwest facades. These have been partially covered with a new bank sign. Above the cornice are office windows that are paired and regularly placed across the street and rear facades. Separating the windows are piers that project slightly from the wall plane. The windows are separated vertically by simple spandrels. Both pilasters and spandrels are clad in glazed yellow brick.

The office floors are terminated by a prominent entablature of white terra cotta. Details include large modillions, a low parapet wall above the cornice and an ornamental pediment with an eagle in the tympanum. These classically derived details were commonly applied to commercial style structures. They present an interesting counterpoint to the rather simple office floors below.

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There have been several alterations to the structure. Metal marquees and modern signs have been added above storefronts. A c. 1920's clock was attached to the first floor of the building at its western corner and some transom windows on the first floor have been altered. In 1927, changes were made to the interior to accommodate safe deposit boxes. In 1951, the bronze doors to the bank were removed and new elevators were also installed. Recently, an automatic teller was installed in one of the glass and iron bay windows of the bank.

Most of the office interiors have maintained their original configurations, doors, and door surrounds. However, one floor has been gutted and all floors have new wall surfaces.

Despite these changes, the building's exterior is quite similar to its original appearance, and a restoration on the interior is attempting to return the banking office to its original form.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	x architecture	education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
1800-1899	x commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater	
x 1900-	communications	industry	politics:government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1912 Builder/Architect F. Stanley Piper and John Graham—Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bellingham National Bank is a significant commercial and architectural landmark in the city of Bellingham. The building is a large, attractively detailed structure designed in the Commercial Style by F. Stanley Piper, the area's foremost architect. The building also commands the downtown's most prominent intersection. Since 1912, it has served as the headquarters for the Bellingham National Bank, a notable financial institution and the only locally owned independent bank left in the city.

The Bellingham National Bank was chartered on November 16, 1904, and began operations early the next year in the Clover Block at Holly and Commercial Streets. By 1912, president Victor Roeder, Virginia Congressman William G. Brown, William McCush, and the other founders secured an option on a 125 by 110 foot building site on the main downtown intersection at Holly Street and Cornwall Avenue and retained the services of architect F. Stanley Piper and an associate, John Graham of Seattle. The project was spearheaded by Roeder, whose father had founded the city in 1852 and amassed a family fortune from a land claim which included most of the downtown. The building the bankers and architects originally planned was only four stories in height; but, as the construction fund grew and investor tenants came forward, an additional floor was added along with better quality materials and richer detailing. The final plans were delivered on July 2, 1912, and work began immediately with the basement excavation and ended with the marble and bronze teller cages being installed and the cast bronze doors opening in the fall of 1913. An original construction contract of \$225,000 was increased by just over \$20,000 with the addition of the fifth floor making the total cost of the building nearly \$250,000.

The bank continued steady growth in its first years at the downtown location, cooperating with the Treasury Department on bond sales during the First World War, surviving the depression and bank closures which followed the war, growing with the local development of agriculture during the twenties, and re-opening after the bank holiday of March 1933 to endure the great depression in a modest yet rock steady fashion. In March and May of 1939, two of the bank's competitors were purchased by the National Bank of Commerce and Seattle First National Bank, leaving Bellingham National Bank the only locally owned independent bank in the city.

The building is a good example of Commercial Style architecture. As is typical for this style, the structure has a visually delineated storefront base, simple repetitive office stories, and a cornice. Another element of the style is the arrangement of the office floors. The regularly spaced office windows are separated by slightly projecting piers which accentuate the vertical emphasis of the architect's design. The classically-inspired iron bays, first floor columns, and cornice ornamentation were not features associated with the Commercial Style. Nevertheless, it is quite common to see such combinations, particularly in banks. When the bank building was completed in 1913, its commercial styling heralded an important aesthetic shift away from the area's ubiquitous brick and sandstone Romanesque structures. And it marked a point in architect Piper's career that established him as an artist in the newly arrived contemporary designs of large scale architecture.

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The Bellingham National Bank Building has maintained its integrity, appearing much as it did when opened in 1913. The yellow brick masonry, accented by finely sculpted terra cotta panels, moldings, and cornices still reflect the careful attention to detail evident in the architect's original design. The structure is a significant community landmark, both visually and historically. The home of an important financial institution, it is also the hub of the city's downtown. It remains an important example of early twentieth century aesthetics and a significant achievement in the career of F. Stanley Piper.

ARCHITECT

F. Stanley Piper was born in England in 1883, where he was educated as an architect and practiced with the Plymouth firm of King and Lister, A.R.I.B.A. He moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1907, and by 1909, had his own office in Bellingham. In that year, he designed the Columbia School and began a career in the Bellingham area that spanned three decades. Piper designed primarily commercial and public buildings, though he also created some notable homes. His works include the Bellingham Herald Building, the Bellingham Fine Arts Building, the Great Northern Train Station, the Eldridge Mansion and Homesite, and the Anacortes Public Library (the latter three properties are listed in the National Register).

Like many of his contemporaries, Piper was comfortable designing work in almost every popular style: Romanesque, Classic Revival, Commercial, Tudor, Mission/Morrish, and Chateausque. A competent and popular architect, Piper provided Northwest Washington state with architectural designs of great diversity and sophistication. His career is unparalleled in Bellingham.

John Graham was appointed as an associate architect on this project. Graham was one of Seattle's most successful and prolific architects; however, his contributions to the design of this structure appear to be minimal. Piper signed all of the drawings and the building incorporates design elements often found in his projects.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Murray, Keith A. The Story of Banking in Whatcom County, 1955.
 Turbeville, Daniel E. An Illustrated Inventory of Historic Bellingham Buildings 1852-1915,
 Bellingham Municipal Arts Commission, 1977.
 Roth, Lottie Roeder. History of Whatcom County, Pioneer Publishing Company, 1926.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Bellingham South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 7 and 8, Block 44, Town of New Whatcom Plat,
 measures 125 feet by 110 feet lot size.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Sullivan, Preservation Consultant Edited by Mark L. Brack
O.A.H.P.

organization Chronicles and Design date April 18, 1983

street & number 1313 North Shore Drive telephone (206) 733-6897 or 671-3525

city or town Bellingham state Washington 98225

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date 9/9/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Bellingham National Bank Building
Bellingham, Washington

Michael Sullivan
April 1983

Washington State Office of Archaeology
and Historic Preservation

Northwest and southwest facades, facing
east

1 of 4



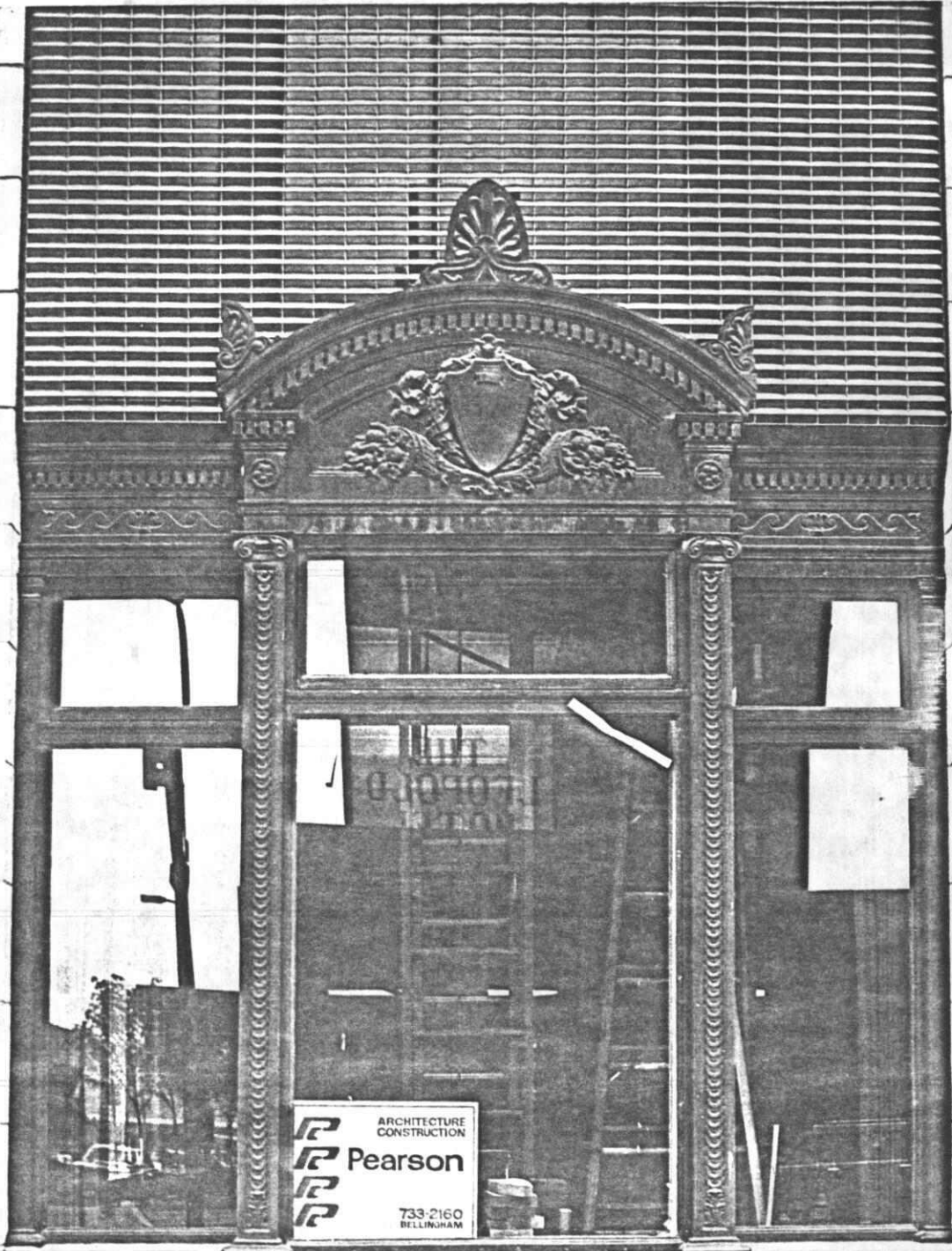
Bellingham National Bank Building
Bellingham, Washington

Mark L. Brack
May 1983

Washington State Office of Archaeology
and Historic Preservation

Streetscape facing northeast along Cornwall
Ave.

2 of 4



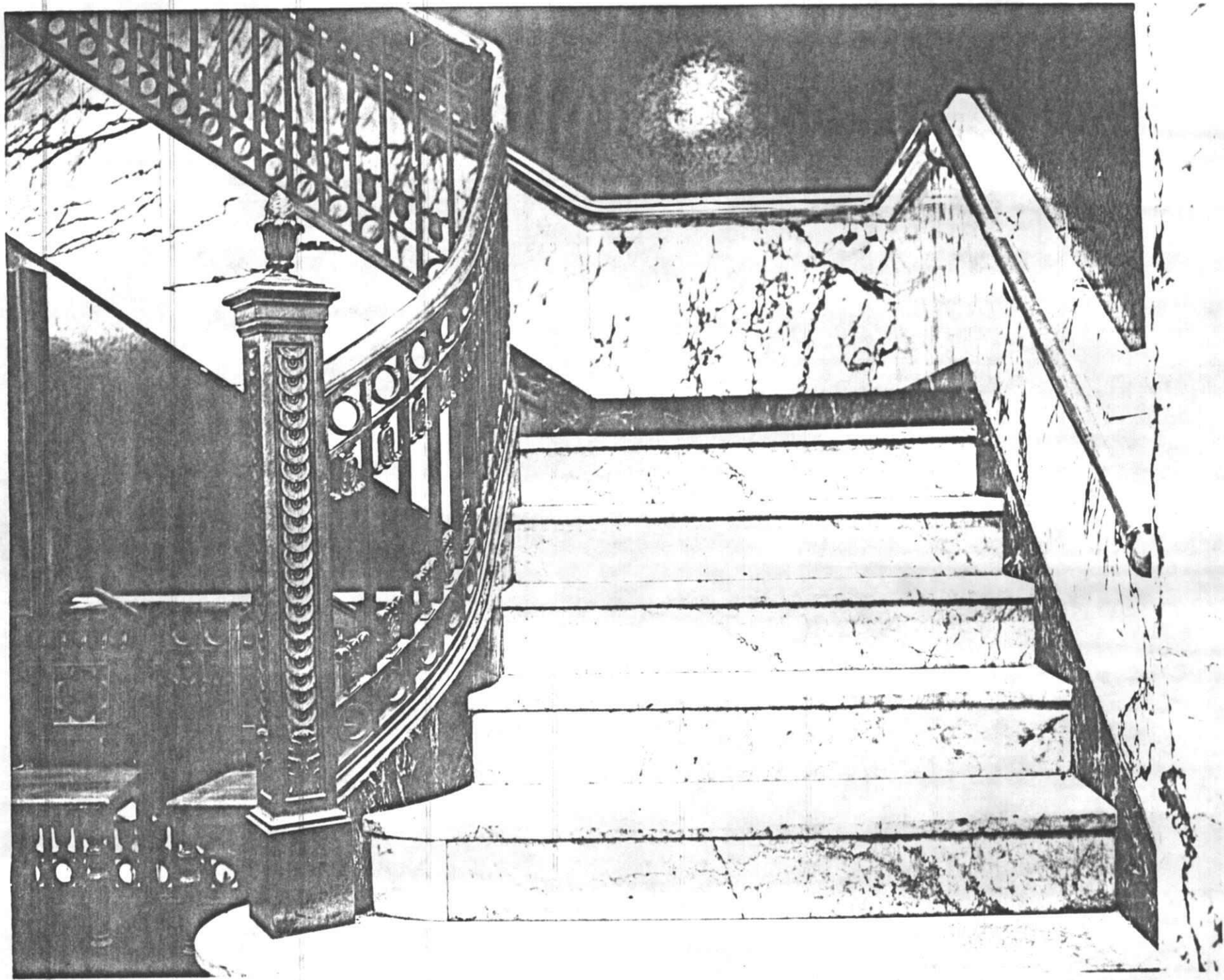
**R
R
R
R** ARCHITECTURE
CONSTRUCTION
Pearson
733-2160
BELLINGHAM

Bellingham National Bank Building
Bellingham, Washington

Mark L. Brack
June 1983

Washington State Office of Archaeology
and Historic Preservation

Bay window on Holly Street, facing northeast



Bellingham National Bank Building
Bellingham, Washington

Mark L. Brack
June 1983

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Interior: Staircase in the lobby of the
first floor

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